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Conclusion: This is the first attempt to collate the available data regarding the epidemiology of HAIs in Australia. Findings will provide hospitals infection prevention and control units an opportunity to benchmark and evaluate interventions to reduce infections and provide transparency on infection rates in hospitals.

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CRITICAL CARE NURSES' KNOWLEDGE, PREPAREDNESS AND EXPERIENCES OF MANAGING COVID-19 IN AUSTRALIA

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Introduction: COVID-19 pandemic has again highlighted the crucial role of the frontline healthcare workers, including practitioners in critical care settings, in case management, disease surveillance, policy development, and clinical education and training. This study aims to explore Australian critical care nurses' knowledge, preparedness and experiences of managing SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19.

Methods: A cross-sectional study of Australian critical care nurses was conducted between June and September 2020. An anonymous online survey was sent out to the members of the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses (ACCCN) to collect data about their knowledge, preparedness and experiences during COVID-19 outbreak. Data were summarised and reported using descriptive statistics. Textual data were analysed using conventional content analysis technique.

Results: A total of 138 critical care nurses participated in this study. Most respondents reported 'good' to 'very good' level of knowledge about COVID-19, and used a variety of sources to obtain up-to-date information about COVID-19. A majority (82.3%) believed they were 'moderately' or 'extremely' prepared for managing COVID-19 by the time they answered the survey, and 93.4% had received specific education, training or instruction about COVID-19. Most participants were involved in assessing (89.3%) and treating (92.4%) COVID-19 cases. Varying levels of concerns about contracting SARS-CoV-2 were expressed by respondents. The most significant challenges during the COVID-19 outbreak were lack of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and fear of their shortage.

Conclusion: These findings can be used in planning for successful outbreak management during the current COVID-19 pandemic and in future outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases.

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AUSTRALIAN INFECTION CONTROL PRACTITIONERS' AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES PHYSICIANS' EXPERIENCES OF MANAGING COVID-19

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Introduction: COVID-19 has placed unprecedented demands on infection control practitioners (ICPs) and infectious diseases (ID) physicians to implement effective infection prevention and disease control strategies. This study examined their knowledge, preparedness, and experiences managing COVID-19 in the Australasian healthcare settings.

Methods: A cross-sectional study of ICPs and ID physician members of the Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control (ACIPC) and the Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID) was conducted. An online, voluntary, and anonymous survey was distributed across membership. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Open text data were analysed using conventional content analysis methods.

Results: A total of 148 survey responses were included in the analysis (103 for ICPs and 45 for ID physicians). The majority of ICPs (78.7%) and ID physicians (77.8%) reported having 'very good' or 'good' level of knowledge of COVID-19. An overwhelming majority of ICPs (96%) and ID physicians (73.3%) reported feeling 'moderately prepared' or 'extremely prepared' for managing COVID-19. A large proportion of ICPs (72%) and ID physicians (64.4%) reported receiving specific training/certification in PPE use, with 88% and 75.5% feeling 'mostly or entirely confident' in using it, respectively. Most ICPs (84.5%) and ID physicians (76.2%) reported having 'considerably' or 'moderately more' work added to their daily duties. Their biggest concerns reported included the uncertainties under a rapidly changing landscape, PPE availability and community's compliance.

Conclusion: Harmonised information and adequate education-training are key to successfully managing COVID-19 and other future outbreaks.

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AUSTRALIAN INFECTION CONTROL PRACTITIONERS' PRACTICE AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN AGED CARE SETTINGS

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Introduction: Healthcare-associated infections are serious and significant complications present across healthcare services, including residential & aged care facilities (RACFs). Although ensuring high quality personal and clinical care delivered to those residing in these facilities is a high national priority, there is a paucity of evidence about outbreaks, governance and education programs held for healthcare workers within Australian residential aged care facilities. This study aims to examine the scope of practice of infection control practitioners (ICPs) within Australian residential aged care facilities and the types of infection prevention and control education and training delivered.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted inviting all Australian residential aged care facilities to participate in an online survey.

Results: A total of 134 residential aged care facilities completed the survey. The majority (88.1%) reported having a designated Infection Prevention and Control professional responsible for surveillance and educational activities.